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Childhood maltreatment: The role of concurrent advantageous experiences on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment

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Abstract

Despite the growing body of evidence concerning the harmful effects of childhood maltreatment, intimate partner violence exposure (IPVE) and their correlates, little is currently known about the effects of co-occurring advantageous family conditions (e.g., instrumental support, inductive parenting, positive communication) and how they may serve to offset the detrimental effects of maltreatment and IPVE. The present study applied a three-step latent class analysis to identify the co-occurrence patterns of childhood maltreatment and advantageous family conditions among 1379 Spanish adolescents. The study also sought to identify the sociodemographic risk markers and psychosocial adjustment associated with each latent class membership. The analyses revealed four classes, namely (1) violent family context, (2) emotionally neglectful family context, (3) adverse and advantageous family conditions, and (4) positive family context. Having a lower socioeconomic status and being a migrant were both risk markers for membership to the violent family context as well as to the adverse and advantageous family conditions class. Adolescents who were exposed to advantageous family conditions (e.g., the positive family context or the adverse and advantageous family conditions) exhibited fewer psychosocial problems (e.g., depression, anxiety, somatisation) and lower frequencies of teen dating violence (TDV) when compared with those in the violent family context. Moreover, membership to the emotionally neglectful family context class was related to more psychological symptoms and a higher prevalence of TDV when compared with membership to the positive family context class, despite the absence of IPVE and maltreatment. Overall, the results provide evidence that advantageous family conditions contribute to better psychosocial adjustment on the part of adolescents even when exposed to IPV and maltreatment. Identifying the experiences that contribute to adolescents' psychosocial adjustment could help clinical and governmental interventions tailor their often-limited resources to children who are at greater risk of negative outcomes.

KEYWORDS
adolescents, advantageous family experiences, family violence, latent class analysis

Each year, approximately one billion children and adolescents worldwide are victims of family violence, whether through exposure to interparental violence or through direct maltreatment by parents or caregivers (United Nations Children's Fund, 2014). In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that around a quarter of all adults worldwide were subjected to physical maltreatment by their parents during their childhood, warning that children who have suffered psychological or emotional maltreatment in the home are much more likely to become victims of neglect and be exposed to interparental violence (WHO, 2020). According to data from the Spanish Ministry of Equality (2019), approximately 30% of Spanish households have experienced situations of family violence, while around half of the children who live in these violent households have been exposed to both interparental violence and direct abuse through physical punishment or neglect by a family member.

Over the past two decades, numerous studies have analysed the frequent co-occurrence of intimate partner violence exposure (IPVE), childhood maltreatment and neglect, in addition to their short- (Brown et al., 2019; Warmingham et al., 2019; Witt et al., 2016) and long-term consequences (Charak et al., 2016; Devowska & Boduszek, 2017; Karsberg et al., 2019; Wolff et al., 2020). Such studies have found evidence that the cumulative experience of maltreatment and violence represents a potential risk factor for diverse physical, psychological, and behavioral problems, interpersonal violence (i.e., teen dating violence [TDV] and bullying) and self-directed violence over the course of an individual's life (Capaldi et al., 2020; Farrell & Zimmerman, 2018; Forke et al., 2018; Garthe et al., 2019; Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2021; Renner & Boel-Studt, 2017; Van Eldik et al., 2020).

Overall, exposure to violence in the home has been shown to be related to higher levels of internalizing symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety, and somatisation) among adolescents, who may tend to develop internalizing symptomatology due to the stress and discomfort experienced as a result of being exposed to different forms of maltreatment (Cohen & Thakur, 2021; Dias et al., 2015; Narayan et al., 2017). Moreover, the lack of emotional and instrumental support available in authoritarian and emotionally neglectful families has been linked to lower levels of self-esteem among young people (Pérez-Gramaje et al., 2020). Prior studies have also documented how adolescents who experience IPVE tend to feel less in control of their circumstances and develop lower levels of self-esteem when the chronicity and history of the IPVE are longer (Cameranesi & Piotrowski, 2017; Graham-Bermann et al., 2009).

One of the most salient social consequences of IPVE during adolescence is TDV. In fact, the cumulative impact of physical maltreatment and IPVE has been shown to be related to an increased risk of TDV whereby both parties in the relationship play the dual roles of perpetrator and victim (Garthe et al., 2019; Renner & Boel-Studt, 2017). Thus, prior research has shown that reciprocal acts of TDV are very likely to be associated with greater dysfunction and maltreatment within the family of origin when compared with nonreciprocal TDV, which suggests that young people who witness violent interactions between caregivers in the home tend to learn and replicate such perpetrator/victim dynamics in their own romantic relations (Cascardi & Muzyczyn, 2016; Evans et al., 2021). Moreover, the overwhelming level of stress associated with exposure to different types of maltreatment (e.g. IPVE and physical maltreatment) is known to be related to the risk of developing internal working models of relationships and a willingness to accept violent/abusive relationship dynamics (Levendosky et al., 2012).

The majority of studies concerning the cumulative effect of childhood maltreatment have been useful in terms of understanding the prevalence and consequences of childhood adversity. However, according to recent review studies, the existing data have a number of limitations that need to be addressed (Van Eldik et al., 2020; Vu et al., 2016). First, prior studies have documented how socio-demographic risk markers and family contextual markers (e.g., low socioeconomic status, low parental education and migration) may be related to a greater likelihood of IPVE or maltreatment (Liao et al., 2011). Yet, it remains largely unknown whether certain of these risk markers are related to certain forms of maltreatment (Liel et al., 2020). In addition, little is currently known about how different patterns of maltreatment and familial conditions may be triggered by certain risk markers. Second, previous studies have solely focused on adversities, which has led to the development of trauma-informed medical and therapeutic interventions that largely ignore preventative approaches (McEwen & Gregerson, 2019; McLennan et al., 2020). This failure to consider concurrent advantageous family conditions may have limited the understanding of the mechanisms that underlie the responses of children and adolescents to violence, maltreatment and neglect. Moreover, the co-occurrence of adverse and advantageous family conditions may partly explain why some children who experience maltreatment or IPVE exhibit negative consequences while others do not (Crandall et al., 2020; Daines et al., 2021; Narayan et al., 2015). In light of these limitations, it is necessary to extend the current limited model by including an assessment of the protective factors that can serve to mitigate the consequences of maltreatment.

Preliminary studies have suggested that advantageous family conditions such as parental warmth, emotional support, instrumental support, high socioeconomic status and residential stability may serve to counteract or offset the effects of childhood maltreatment on individuals' psychopathology, stress and trauma (Bethell et al., 2019; Crandall et al., 2020; Gunay-Oge et al., 2020). For example, Crandall et al. (2019) found that the cumulative effect of relational support and perceived safety was related to better health and the neutralization of the negative effects of maltreatment in adulthood, while Bethell et al. (2019) revealed that parental warmth, instrumental support and family communication were all related to better perceived mental health and lower depression scores in adults after controlling for physical or emotional abuse or neglect. Furthermore, Daines et al. (2021) found that advantageous family experiences, even when accompanied by early exposure to violence, supported the foundation of healthier families in adulthood. Therefore, according to the findings of prior research, the experience of advantageous family conditions (positive communication at home,

instrumental support and inductive parenting) could potentially be more salient in relation to health than the experience of maltreatment and IPVE and, further, may even counteract its negative effects by influencing the development and management of daily stressors (Anda et al., 2020; Crandall et al., 2019).

It should be noted that adolescents may be particularly sensitive to both adverse and positive experiences due to being in the process of undergoing several psychological, physical and social changes aligned with fundamental brain maturation processes (e.g. in the prefrontal cortex), which are fundamental with regard to adult behavioral performance and self-regulation (Fuhrman et al., 2015). Thus, advantageous family conditions such as perceived instrumental support (Crandall et al., 2019), emotional closeness (Bethell et al., 2019) and inductive discipline (including other-oriented reasoning and explanation; Hoffman, 1983) during adolescence appear to be key components of adolescents' adjustment in the face of adversity (Crandall et al., 2020). Understanding which advantageous family conditions may be especially important when it comes to neutralizing the negative effects of childhood maltreatment and IPVE, as well as determining whether such advantageous conditions co-occur with different types of maltreatment, are vital in terms of addressing the childhood and social determinants of lifelong health (Narayan et al., 2018).

Based on the above, the present study had three key aims. First, the study sought to empirically identify the co-occurrence patterns of childhood maltreatment (IPVE, psychological maltreatment, physical maltreatment and power-assertive discipline) and advantageous family conditions (instrumental support, emotional closeness, positive communication and inductive discipline) among 1379 Spanish adolescents aged between 13 and 18 years. Second, the study sought to examine the association between the identified sociodemographic covariates (risk markers) and latent class membership in an effort to distinguish between aggravating and protective contextual or social circumstances with regard to IPVE and maltreatment, such as perceived economic status, migration (defined as being foreign-born), sex and age (Hughes et al., 2017; MacDonell, 2012; Vu et al., 2016). Third, the study sought to analyse the relationship between exposure to different cumulative patterns of maltreatment and advantageous family conditions and psychosocial adjustment among adolescents (depression symptoms, anxiety, somatisation, low self-esteem and the frequency of TDV victimization and perpetration).

Based on the findings of prior studies, the following hypotheses were formulated. First, different patterns of childhood maltreatment and advantageous family conditions would be experienced by the adolescents, at least one of which would be characterized by different types of maltreatment and violent interactions among family members (high levels of interparental violence, maltreatment and power-assertive discipline), while another would be characterized by advantageous family conditions (emotional closeness, parent-child communication, instrumental support and inductive discipline. Second, membership of the latent classes characterized by greater probabilities of maltreatment and IPVE would be related to previously documented family violence risk markers, such as lower socioeconomic status and migration (Costa et al., 2015; Timshel et al., 2017). Third, living in adverse family contexts (characterized by childhood maltreatment, IPVE and emotional neglect) would be associated with higher levels of depression, anxiety and somatisation, lower self-esteem and higher frequencies of TDV (Devowska & Boduszek, 2017; Grasso et al., 2016; Wolff et al., 2020). Fourth, exposure to advantageous family conditions would be related to a better psychosocial adjustment and serve to mitigate the detrimental effects of childhood maltreatment and IPVE (Bethell et al., 2019; Crandall et al., 2020; Gunay-Oge et al., 2020).

2 | METHOD

2.1 | Participants

Participants were 1379 adolescents aged between 13 and 18 years (M = 15.30, SD = 1.21) from 13 Public Secondary Education Centers in the Community of Madrid, Spain. Of these, 51.55% (n = 711) were female and 48.45% (n = 668) male, 94.8% (n = 1307) identified themselves as heterosexuals, and the remaining 5.2% (n = 72) as bisexual or homosexual. At the time of the study, 36.4% were in a dating relationship and 64.6% had been in a relationship previously. All the participants were studying Compulsory Secondary Education (8.9% were in the first year, 4.5% in the second year, 49.5% in the third year, and 37.1% in the fourth year). Of the adolescents, 14.6% (n = 201) considered they belonged to a low or very low socioeconomic class, 76.0% (n = 1049) to a medium socioeconomic class, and 9.4% (n = 129) to a high or very high socioeconomic class. By nationalities, 72.4% of the participants were Spanish and 27.6% identified themselves as migrants (22.6% of Latin American origin, 3.1% from Eastern Europe, and 1.9% from African countries). Inclusion criteria were: (a) being between 13 and 18 years old, (b) fluent Spanish reading and understanding, (c) Whether the adolescents were in a dating relationship or had previously had one, (d) living with both parents or having regular contact with each parent (e.g., split custody).

2.2 | Instruments

2.2.1 | Sociodemographic data questionnaire, ad hoc

This questionnaire was used to collect sociodemographic data such as the age, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, migration, parental education and socioeconomic status of the participants. The participants' perceived socioeconomic status was determined using a Likert-type item (*How would you describe the socioeconomic situation in your home?*), which had five response options (1 = very inferior, 2 = inferior, 3 = medium, 4 = superior, 5 = very superior). The statistical relation between perceived socioeconomic status and parental education was tested to assess the validity of the participants'

self-perceived socioeconomic status. The correlation between parental education and socioeconomic status was moderate (father = $r = .61$, $p < .001$; mother = $r = .57$, $p < .001$; Akoglu, 2018).

2.2.2 | Intimate partner violence exposure

Eight items of the Conflict Tactics Scale Form CTS2-CA (Straus et al., 1995) were used to measure exposure to physically aggressive behaviors by the father against the mother (4 items; e.g., "*Your father pushed or slapped your mother,*" "*Your father destroyed something that belonged to your mother*") and by the mother against the father (4 items; e.g., "*Your mother pushed or slapped your father,*" "*Your mother destroyed something that belonged to your father*") throughout the participants' lifetime. The 8 Likert-type items with 6 response options regarding the frequency of the aggressions (0 = *never*, 1 = *rarely*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often*, 4 = *almost always*, 5 = *always*) were added to obtain a total score of exposure to interparental violence. Psychometric properties and scoring instructions for the Spanish version of the scale were obtained from the Manual developed by the original authors (Straus, 1997). The scale obtained satisfactory data with a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .86 95% confidence interval (CI) [0.85–0.87].

2.2.3 | Childhood maltreatment

Nine items of the Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale Form CTSPC-CA (Straus et al., 1995) were used to measure the frequency of physical (5 items; e.g., *"Your parents hit or kicked you"*) and psychological (4 items; *"Your parents shouted, yelled or screamed at you"*) maltreatment suffered by the participants throughout their lives. The Likert-type items had 6 response options (0 = *never*, 1 = *rarely*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often*, 4 = *almost always*, 5 = *always*) items were added to obtain a total assessment for physical and psychological maltreatment. The scale obtained satisfactory data with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .80 95% CI [0.79–0.82].

2.2.4 | Parental disciplinary strategies

The Spanish adaptation (Gámez-Guadix et al., 2010) of the Dimensions of Discipline Inventory, Form-A (DDI-A; Straus & Fauchier, 2007) was used to evaluate parents' power-assertive and inductive disciplinary strategies toward participants throughout their lives. Six items on the original scale were used to power-assertive discipline (2 items; e.g., *Your parents shook you or grabbed you to get your attention*") and inductive discipline (4 items; e.g., "*Your parents explained to you why they did what they did to correct you*"). The Likert-type items had six response options (0 = *never*, 1 = *rarely*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often*, 4 = *almost always*, 5 = *always*). The scale obtained satisfactory data with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .70 95% CI [0.67–0.74] for power-assertive discipline and .70 95% CI [0.67–0.74] for inductive discipline.

2.2.5 | Advantageous family experiences scale (AFE)

The AFE Scale was used to measure the participants' exposure to advantageous family conditions, such as positive communication between parents and children (e.g., *I speak honestly and confidently with my mother about my issues*), emotional closeness (e.g., *I feel very close to my father*) and instrumental support received from parents when facing difficulties (e.g., *When you have any doubts or difficulties with your studies, you can go to your mother for advice on what to do*). The questionnaire was comprised of six items with three response options (0 = never, 1 = sometimes, 2 = always). Each item was asked twice, with the first time referring to the quality of the relationship with the mother and the second referring to the quality of the relationship with the father. The scores for the relationships with both parents were added to obtain the total score for each dimension. When only one parent was present, the participants' AFE total was scored based on the parent score alone. The original set of items was developed by the research team based on prior investigations of advantageous family conditions (Bethell et al., 2019; Crandall et al., 2020; Gunay-Oge et al., 2020). Subsequently, two independent researchers with knowledge of childhood adversities, family conditions and children's adjustment analysed and scored the quality of the items (assigning a score between 0 and 10). The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient between the independent researchers was 0.79. The scale's construct validity was tested, and a negative correlation was found between the three dimensions of the AFE Scale and both the power-assertive discipline scale from the DDI-A ($p < .001$) and the psychological maltreatment dimension from the CTSPC-CA scale ($p < .001$). Moreover, positive correlation was found between the three dimensions of the AFE Scale and the inductive discipline dimension from the CTSPC-CA scale ($p < .001$). The AFE Scale was found to have a satisfactory Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .74 [0.72–0.76].

2.2.6 | Teen dating violence

The Spanish validation (Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2012) of the Modified Conflict Tactics Scale (Carscardi et al., 1999) was used to evaluate the frequency of psychological victimization (5 items; "*Has your boyfriend/girlfriend insulted or cursed you?*"), psychological perpetration (5 items; *e.g., "Have you insulted or cursed your boyfriend/girlfriend?"*), physical victimization (10 items; e.g., *"Has your boyfriend/girlfriend hit you?*) and physical perpetration (10 items; e.g., *"Have you ever hit your boyfriend/girlfriend?"*) in dating relationships. The Likert-type items had five response options (0 = *never*, 1 = *rarely*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often*, 4 = *very often*). The scale obtained acceptable data with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .65 95% CI [0.61–0.67] for

psychological victimization and of .76 95% CI [0.74–0.78] for physical victimization.

2.2.7 | Adolescents internalizing symptoms

The Spanish adaptation of Pereda et al. (2007) of the Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogatis, 2013) was used to measure symptoms of depression (6 items; clinical symptoms characteristic of depressive disorder such as dysphoria, loss of energy, loss of interest, and hopelessness; "*feeling hopeless about the future,*" "*feeling sad,*" "*not feeling interested in things*"), anxiety (6 items; general signs of anxiety and panic attacks, such as restlessness, nervousness, and tension, "*feeling tense or agitated,*" "*to be afraid suddenly and for no reason*") and somatization (7 items; psychological discomfort caused by the perception of bodily problems, "*sensation of faintness or dizziness,*" "*feeling weak in any part of the body*"). This self-report measure is composed of 19 Likert-type items with 5 response options (0 = *not at all*, 1 = *little*, 2 = *moderately*, 3 = *quite*, 4 = *a lot or extremely*) to evaluate the psychopathological state of normal subjects during the last week. This scale obtained an acceptable reliability index for symptoms of depression (α = .77), anxiety (α = .78) and somatization (α = .79) in the Spanish adaptation. In this study, the reliability of the scale measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each subscale was α = .86 95% CI [0.84–0.87], α = .81 95% CI [0.79–0.83] and α = .83 95% CI [0.81–0.84], respectively.

2.2.8 | Self-esteem

The Spanish validation (Martín-Albo et al., 2007) of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1989) was used to measure participants' self-esteem, defined as the individual's set of thoughts and feeling about their worth and importance, as well as the positive and negative attitudes towards themselves. The RSES is a self-reported measurement composed of 10 Likert-type items with 4 response options (1 = *Totally disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Agree*, 4 = *Totally agree*), designed to measure positive self-evaluation (5 items; e.g., "*In general I am satisfied with myself*") and negative self-evaluation (5 items; e.g., "*Sometimes I think that I am not good at all*"). In the present study, the reliability of the scale measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .83 95% CI [0.81–0.85].

3 | PROCEDURE

The evaluation took place in 13 public Secondary Education Centers in the Autonomous Community of Madrid during the 2016–2017 academic year. Schools were chosen by convenience according to the centers' disposition to collaborate with the study. Students' participation was voluntary and anonymous after the informed consent of the adolescents, the informed consent of the parents or legal guardians, and the agreement with the School Guidance Office and the Association of Parents of Students at each school. The average duration of the evaluation sessions was 60 min. Survey completion was led by qualified psychologists trained by the research team in the application of protocols and guidance for victims of dating violence. Supporting references were provided for the participants at the end of the survey, including names, telephone, and emails of support institutions. The schools were selected for convenience and according to their availability and desire to participate after being invited. All the procedures in the study were approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Autonomous University of Madrid (CEI-85-1576).

3.1 | Data analysis

First, a bilingual independent researcher from Spain, translated the CTSPC-CA and CTS2-CA scales focusing on grammar, terminology, and the colloquial use of words in Spain. Then a second bilingual researcher carried out the backtranslations of the scale to assure the maintenance of the semantic equivalence. Any discrepancies between the researchers were discussed until an agreement was reached. Then reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all the scales used in the study, followed by descriptive and frequency analyses for all the variables. Latent class analysis (LCA) was then performed to identify latent classes of individuals based on a set of variables observed in the participants (Hagenaars & McCutcheon, 2002). A total of eight indicators were used to perform LCA, four related to childhood maltreatment and violence exposure (exposure to interparental violence, psychological maltreatment, power-assertive discipline, and physical maltreatment), and four advantageous family experiences (positive communication, emotional closeness, instrumental support received from parents when facing difficulties and inductive discipline). The total scores for each indicator were trichotomized (0 = *less than −0.5 standard deviations above the mean*; 1 = *between −0.5 and 0.5 standard deviations above the mean*; 2 = *more than 0.5 standard deviations above the mean*) to facilitate data interpretability between measurements. To perform the LCA, an initial one-class LCA model was calculated which served as a baseline for comparing adjustment in the subsequent models. The number (k) of estimated classes increased one by one (Nylund-Gibson & Choi, 2018) until reaching a six-class solution. For each LCA model, the change in the adjustment indices concerning the previous models was analysed to determine whether each tested model was statistically and conceptually superior to the previous ones (Muthén & Muthén, 2000). The fit of the estimated models was examined using the Akaike information criterion (AIC), the Bayesian information criterion (BIC), the sample size adjusted Bayesian information criterion (SSBIC), and the entropy value, the Lo-Mendell-Rubin adjusted likelihood ratio test, and the bootstrapped likelihood ratio test. Lower values for the AIC, BIC, and SSBIC indices and values closer to 1 for the entropy value were deemed indicators of better fit (Nylund et al., 2007). In addition, using the TECH 11 and TECH 14 commands in MPLUS allowed the analysis of the LMR and BLRT values to compare the fit of each k class versus k-1 class. Once the

optimal number of latent classes was determined, sociodemographic covariates (e.g., age, sex, nationality, and socioeconomic level) were included simultaneously in the analysis as class predictor variables through multinomial logistic regressions using the 3-step approach (R3STEP command; Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014). Finally, an additional LCA was conducted to analyze the associations between assigned class memberships and distal outcome variables using auxiliary variables: depression, anxiety, somatization, self-esteem, and dating violence perpetration and victimization (e.g., psychological, physical; Figure 1). Distal outcomes were treated as having unequal means and variances, pairwise differences were estimated in distal outcomes between classes, and a stepwise Bonferroni correction was used to adjust for multiple comparisons (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014). The missing data (<5%) was handled with the listwise deletion method. Complete case analysis with less than 5% of missing data is recommended, no biases have been found nor practical implications with this percentage of missing data (Drechsler, 2015). The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

4 | RESULTS

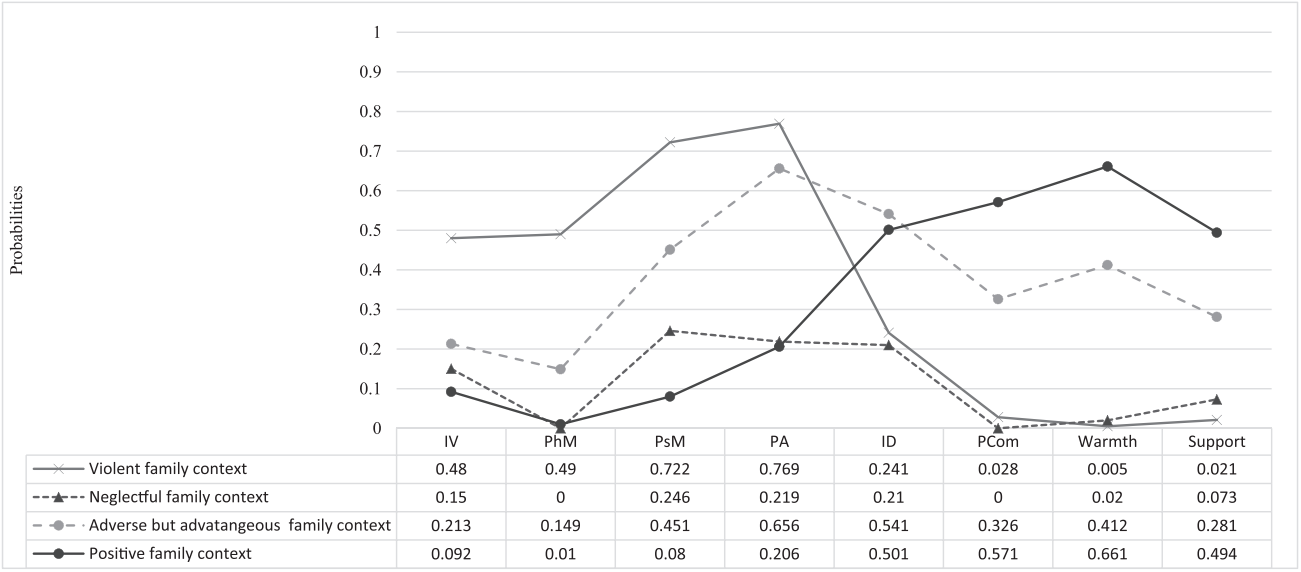
4.1 | Adverse and advantageous childhood experiences

Most participants had been exposed to child maltreatment within their families. The most frequent types of victimization were psychological maltreatment (83.3%) and exposure to IPV (52.7%). The percentage of participants reporting that their parents had used power-assertive discipline (e.g., physical punishment) throughout their lives was 67.3%. On the other hand, around 60% of the adolescents stated that they had experienced advantageous family experiences, such as emotional closeness (62.2%), and positive communication with their parents (59.5%) and, where they, in the face of any difficulty or problem, could go to their parents to request instrumental or emotional support (60%; Table 1).

4.2 | Latent classes of family contexts

A total of six consecutive LCs models were run to identify the underlying classification of the sample based on the response probabilities of the observed variables. The AIC, BIC, and SSBIC indicators improved from the 2-class model to the 4-class model but began to worsen in subsequent models. The *p* values associated with the LMR value for the models 2, 3, and 4 class models were significant, indicating an improvement in the fit when compared to the *k*-1 model. Therefore, models 2 to 4 were analysed based on parsimony, sample size, and theoretical significance of the classification. The 4-class model was selected as the best solution given the improvement observed in the indices, size of the clusters, and interpretability of the results (Table 2).

Each class was named based on the probability of adverse and advantageous experiences indicators. Class 1 ($n = 355$; 24.9%) "Violent family context," was characterized by high probabilities of exposure to interparental violence, psychological maltreatment,



	IV	PhM	PsM	PA	ID	PCom	Warmth	Support
Violent family context	0.48	0.49	0.722	0.769	0.241	0.028	0.005	0.021
Neglectful family context	0.15	0	0.246	0.219	0.21	0	0.02	0.073
Adverse but advatangeous family context	0.213	0.149	0.451	0.656	0.541	0.326	0.412	0.281
Positive family context	0.092	0.01	0.08	0.206	0.501	0.571	0.661	0.494

FIGURE 1 Profile plot and probabilities from LCA of family violence, parenting styles, and family functioning. *Note*: Class 1, Violent family context ($n = 355$; 24.9%). Class 2, Emotionally Neglectful family context ($n = 293$; 21.9%), Class 3, Adverse but advantageous family conditions ($n = 399$; 29.0%), Class 4, Positive family context ($n = 332$; 24.1%). ID, inductive discipline; IV, interparental violence; PA, power-assertive discipline; PCom, positive communication; PhM, physical maltreatment; PsM, psychological maltreatment

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics of study, categorical, and continuous variables

	%	*M*	*SD*	Observed range
Childhood maltreatment				
Exposure to interparental violence	57.2	3.04	4.6	0–40
Physical maltreatment	37.2	1.24	2.43	0–23
Psychological maltreatment	83.3	4.63	4.05	0–20
Power-assertive discipline	67.3	1.83	1.98	0–10
Advantageous family experiences				
DDI-A Positive communication	59.5	2.60	1.12	0–4
AFE Emotional closeness	62.2	1.71	1.14	0–4
AFE Instrumental support	60.0	1.75	1.19	0–4
AFE Inductive parenting	88.0	9.57	6.18	0–20
Psychosocial adjustment				
Depression	–	11.38	5.36	6–30
Anxiety	–	11.07	4.71	6–30
Somatization	–	11.95	5.27	7–35
Self-esteem	–	30.30	5.39	10–40
Psychological TDV victimization	90.8	4.54	3.24	0–20
Physical TDV victimization	29.5	0.85	2.14	0–23
Psychological TDV perpetration	91.7	4.84	3.57	0–20
Physical TDV perpetration	30.0	0.95	2.42	0–24

Note: %. Percentages based on the dichotomization of the continuous scales, absence/presence of the experience was coded as 0 and presence as 1.

Abbreviations. AFE, advantageous family experiences; DDI-A, discipline dimensions inventory for adolescents; TDV, teen dating violence.

physical maltreatment, and power-assertive discipline, in addition to low probabilities of the use of inductive discipline, emotional closeness, positive communication or support. Class 2 ($n = 393$; 21.9%) "Emotionally Neglectful family context," was characterized by low probabilities of family violence and low probabilities of positive communication, emotional closeness, or instrumental support for the children. Class 3 ($n = 399$; 29.0%) "Adverse and advantageous family conditions" was characterized by high probabilities of psychological maltreatment, as well as power-assertive discipline strategies, high probabilities of emotional closeness, positive communication, and instrumental support. Class 4 ($n = 332$; 24.1%) "Positive family context" was characterized by low probabilities of violence and high probabilities of inductive discipline, positive communication, emotional closeness, and instrumental support (Figure 1).

4.3 | Associations between sociodemographic factors and latent class membership

When analysing the potential covariate sociodemographic predictors (risk markers) for each latent class, the participants' age, gender, nationality and perceived socioeconomic level were found to be associated with latent class membership. Overall, the participants in the violent family context class were more likely to have a significatively inferior perceived socioeconomic level than the participants in the three other classes. Moreover, the participants in the violent family context class were older than those in the positive family context and emotionally neglectful family context classes. In addition, nationality (non-Spaniard) was found to be an important risk marker for violent family context class membership when compared with the positive family context and the emotionally neglectful family context classes. Finally, the male participants were more likely than the female participants to belong to the violent family context class when compared with the adverse and advantageous family conditions class (Tables 3 and 4).

TABLE 2 Fit indices for the latent class models with one to six classes based on family violence, parenting styles, and family functioning scores

Number of classes	LMR *p* value	BLRT *p* value	AIC	BIC	SSABIC
1	–	–	21824.409	21908.075	21857.249
2	1125.212 (.000)	−10896.205 (.000)	20724.041	20896.602	20791.774
3	386.319 (.000)	−10329.021 (.000)	20368.578	20630.034	20471.204
4	221.575 (.000)	−10134.289 (.000)	20179.200	20529.551	20316.718
5	84.372 (.09)	−10022.600 (.000)	20128.142	20567.387	20300.553
6	72.63 (.76)	−9980.07 (.000)	20088.921	20617.061	20326.224

Abbreviations: AIC, Akaike information criterion; BIC, Bayesian information criterion; BLRT, Bootstrapped likelihood ratio test; LMR, Lo–Mendell–Rubin adjusted likelihood ratio test; SSABIC, Sample size adjusted Bayesian information criterion.

TABLE 3 Multinomial logistic regressions using the 3-step procedure for sociodemographic predictors of latent class membership

	Class 1 vs. Class 2				Class 1 vs. Class 3				Class 1 vs. Class 4			
	B	*SE*	*Z*-test	*B*(est)	*B*	*SE*	*Z*-test	*B*(est)	*B*	*SE*	*Z*-test	*B*(est)
Age	−0.204**	0.075	−2.708	0.813	−0.207	0.107	−1.938	0.810	−0.252***	0.071	−3.555	0.772
Sex	−0.118	0.165	−0.717	0.899	0.907***	0.247	3.671	2.434	0.107	0.157	0.679	1.121
Nationality	−0.443*	0.179	−2.481	0.633	−0.429	0.259	−1.657	0.648	−0.797***	0.177	−4.497	0.439
Socioeconomic level	0.355*	0.157	2.262	1.450	0.458*	0.233	1.960	1.593	0.548*	0.161	3.398	1.766

Note: Class 1 = violent family context, Class 2 = neglectful family context, Class 3 = adverse and advantageous family conditions, Class 4 = positive family context. Sex = 0 "girl," 1 "boy"; Nationality = 0 "Spain," 1 "other." *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

TABLE 4 Means and standard deviations across latent classes on depression, anxiety, somatization, self-esteem, and dating violence victimization scores

	VFC (1)	ENFC (2)	AAFC (3)	PFC (4)	Chi-square	Bonferroni
Depression	13.74 (0.35)	11.58 (0.35)	11.17 (0.30)	9.13 (0.27)	127.21***	1 > 2,3,4; 2 > 4; 3 > 4
Anxiety	12.79 (0.31)	10.68 (0.30)	11.16 (0.27)	9.70 (0.26)	71.13***	1 > 2,3,4; 2 > 4; 3 > 4
Somatization	14.02 (0.37)	11.42 (0.36)	12.39 (0.35)	10.89 (0.33)	56.37***	1 > 2,3,4; 2 > 4; 3 > 4
Self-esteem	28.10 (0.38)	29.72 (0.37)	30.39 (0.37)	31.91 (0.37)	54.19***	1 < 2,3,4; 2 < 3, 4; 3 < 4
Psychological DVV	5.33 (0.21)	4.93 (0.19)	4.59 (0.19)	4.03 (0.19)	19.06***	1 > 3,4; 2 > 4; 3 > 4
Physical DVV	1.16 (0.16)	0.70 (0.12)	0.72 (0.13)	0.71 (0.13)	13.32**	1 > 3,4; 2 > 4
Psychological DVP	5.66 (0.21)	4.99 (0.29)	4.83 (0.17)	4.14 (0.17)	23.74***	1 > 3,4; 2 > 4; 3 > 4
Physical DVP	11.53 (0.18)	10.88 (0.18)	10.79 (0.16)	10.68 (0.10)	14.22**	1 > 4; 2 > 4; 3 > 4

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Abbreviations: AAFC, adverse and advantageous family conditions; DVP, dating violence perpetration; DVV, dating violence victimization; ENFC, emotionally neglectful family context; PFC, positive family context; VFC, violent family context.

4.4 | Psychosocial adjustment related to each family contexts

The participants in the violent family context class exhibited significantly higher levels of depression, anxiety and somatisation, lower self-esteem and a higher frequency of TDV perpetration and victimization than the participants in the other three classes. By contrast, the participants in the positive family context exhibited significantly higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of depression, anxiety and somatisation than the rest of the participants. Moreover, the participants in the positive family context were associated with significantly lower levels of TDV perpetration and victimization through psychological and physical aggression. Additionally, the participants in the adverse and advantageous family conditions class, despite having been exposed to psychological maltreatment and physical punishment, exhibited lower frequencies of TDV, anxiety, depression and somatisation than the participants in the violent family context. Furthermore, the participants in the adverse and advantageous family conditions class had significantly higher levels of self-esteem when compared with the participants in the violent family context and the emotionally neglectful family context. Finally, the participants in the emotionally neglectful family context, despite not having been exposed to violent experiences (physical maltreatment, psychological maltreatment, IPVE or physical punishment) exhibited significantly higher levels of depression, anxiety and somatisation than the participants in the positive family context. The former participants also had higher levels of TDV victimization (physical and psychological) and higher frequencies of psychological TDV perpetration when compared with the latter participants.

5 | DISCUSSION

The present study sought to extend our understanding of the nature and interplay of different family characteristics, in addition to elucidating the effect of childhood maltreatment, emotional neglect, IPVE and advantageous family conditions on psychosocial adjustment among the adolescent population.

First, our findings reveal the high prevalence of childhood maltreatment through violent and neglectful behaviors in the home among Spanish adolescents, which is in accordance with the findings of previous studies at both the national (Spanish Ministry of Equality, 2019) and international (Forke et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2017) levels. As in other European countries, the most commonly experienced adversity in our sample was psychological maltreatment,

followed by IPVE, which was present in more than 50% of cases (Stoltenborg et al., 2015). The high prevalence of power-assertive discipline strategies (e.g., physical punishment) is noteworthy, as more than 65% of our participants reported that, on some occasions, their parents hit or physically reprimanded them, despite the reported decrease in the use of such practices worldwide over the last three decades (Capaldi et al., 2020). Future studies should investigate the risk factors associated with the maintenance of such a high prevalence of physical punishment and maltreatment among the Spanish population. Furthermore, particular attention should be paid to factors such as the socioeconomic level and culture, as both have previously been suggested to be family violence risk markers, in addition to being identified as predictors of violent family context membership in our LCA analysis (Costa et al., 2015; Gershoff et al., 2018; Timshel et al., 2017). Second, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study conducted in Spain to address the buffering effect of positive family conditions. Our results allowed us to corroborate the previously documented co-occurrence of maltreatment and positive family conditions (Broadbent et al., 2021; Crandall et al., 2021; Crandall et al., 2020). In fact, almost 30% of the participants who reported being exposed to childhood maltreatment in our sample also reported experiencing advantageous family conditions.

Regarding our first hypothesis, the results of our analyses supported the existence of different patterns of childhood maltreatment and advantageous family conditions. Moreover, our results corroborated the existence of one class characterized by maltreatment and violent patterns of interaction as well as another class characterized by advantageous family conditions. Additionally, our results allowed us to identify one pattern wherein maltreatment, IPVE and advantageous family conditions co-occurred in different proportions as well as one pattern wherein none of them were evident. The most prevalent family context was the adverse and advantageous family conditions class (n = 399; 29%), followed by the violent family context (n = 355; 24.9%), the positive family context (n = 332; 24%) and the emotionally neglectful family context (n = 293; 21.9%). Interestingly, in most cases, the presence of maltreatment (e.g., physical punishment or IPVE) did not exclude the occurrence of positive family conditions, including support, closeness and communication between parents and children (i.e., the adverse and advantageous family conditions class). Nor did the absence of maltreatment (the less prevalent class) imply the existence of advantageous family conditions (i.e., the emotionally neglectful family context). These findings indicate the need to overcome the traditional perspective adopted by child adversity studies that solely focus on the presence or absence of negative experiences in the home. Rather, it is important to adopt a person-centered approach capable of organizing children into a finite, mutually exclusive and exhaustive subgroup that comprises similar experiences and can better explain the entire familial situation in which children are immersed (McEwen & Gregerson, 2019; McLennan et al., 2020). Thus, the inclusion of concurrent advantageous family conditions could represent a major breakthrough in terms of the recognition of protective factors that may bolster adolescents' decision making, health and personality development despite any maltreatment and IPVE (Adhia et al., 2019; Harold & Sellers, 2018; Willems et al., 2018).

With regard to our second hypothesis, our results corroborated the finding of prior studies that a lower socioeconomic status and being a migrant serve as risk markers for belonging to the classes characterized by maltreatment and IPVE (Liel et al., 2020). Furthermore, the younger adolescents were the most likely to belong to the positive family context, which may be explained by the fact that adolescents may become more likely to be disobedient and rebellious toward their parents as they age, which could place them at greater risk of maltreatment and power-assertive discipline strategies (Liu & Zhou, 2006). In addition, younger adolescents may be less likely to experience IPVE, as their parents may perceive it to be more harmful for younger children and so try to shield them from it (Liao et al., 2011). Longitudinal studies should acknowledge the trends concerning childhood maltreatment and positive family conditions across the different stages of adolescence.

In terms of our third hypothesis, our results indicated that membership to the violent family context and the emotionally neglectful family context was related to higher levels of depression, anxiety and somatisation, lower levels of self-esteem and a higher prevalence of psychological and physical TDV victimization and perpetration. This corroborates previous findings that both direct exposure to different types of violence as well as the effect of emotional distancing and lack of communication and instrumental support from parents during adolescence can be equally harmful to adolescents' wellbeing and development (Narayan et al., 2018; Negriff, 2020). By contrast, as in prior research (Mumford et al., 2016), membership of the positive family context was related to less psychological symptomatology and a lower prevalence of TDV when compared with membership of the violent family context class.

Overall, our results partially supported our fourth hypothesis, as advantageous family conditions contributed to better adolescent psychological and social adjustment even when accompanied by childhood maltreatment (Bethell et al., 2019; Broadbent et al., 2021; Daines et al., 2021). Membership in the adverse and advantageous family conditions class was related to a higher level of self-esteem and a lower prevalence of TDV perpetration and victimization than the adolescents in the violent family context. However, membership to the adverse and advantageous family conditions class did not guarantee the absence of negative outcomes. Adolescents in this class still showed worst results than the adolescents in the positive family context. Future studies should seek to extend the analysis of the buffering effect of diverse positive family conditions on adolescents' adjustment and explore how individuals respond differently depending on the balance of adverse and advantageous experiences they face.

It is important to recognize that this study had a number of limitations. First, the data were collected at a single point in time, which implies that future retrospective self-report studies should examine our findings using a longitudinal design in an effort to corroborate causality and distinguish mobility between the classes

over time. Second, the collected data were based entirely on adolescents' self-report measures, which could lead to certain biases in terms of the information provided. Future studies should include multiple informants (e.g., parents, teachers) to achieve a broader and less biased view of the family context and its impact on adolescents' wellbeing and development. In addition, not all of the adverse childhood experiences that could potentially be experienced by adolescents in the home were included in this study. Future investigations should analyse the patterns and effects of a broader number of adversities, including parental mental problems, substance abuse and different types of neglect (e.g. physical neglect, medical neglect or educational neglect), as only emotional neglect was included in this study (lack of communication, social support and parental warm). Our results concerning should be interpreted with caution due to the high prevalence of psychological TDV perpetration and victimization and the potential for Type 1 errors. Finally, the AFE Scale was developed specifically for this study and, while it showed good statistical properties, future studies should seek to validate its use in different samples so as to ensure its theoretical and statistical strength when accounting for advantageous family conditions.

The findings of the present study have several important implications in relation to clinical interventions among the adolescent population and their families. Overall, our results highlighted the need for policies that introduce preventive and protective social programmes regarding the norms and attitudes assisted with childhood maltreatment, parenting styles and advantageous family conditions. This should serve to (a) offset the detrimental effects of IPVE and maltreatment, (b) enhance adolescents' psychological adjustment and (c) prevent TDV victimization and perpetration. It would also be desirable for such programmes to include strategies intended to help parents to increase the advantageous conditions in the home, such as positive communication, emotional closeness and instrumental support. Moreover, our findings emphasized the high prevalence of advantageous family conditions, even in families where childhood maltreatment and IPVE co-occur. This finding appears especially promising because it implies that social and clinical interventions may not need to focus on promoting new parenting strategies, but rather on reinforcing the ones that already exist. This could potentially help clinical and governmental interventions to tailor their often-limited resources to children at greater risk of negative outcomes. Adolescent dating violence among youth exposed to intimate partner violence: A systematic review.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed with the conceptualization, investigation, formal analysis, and writing. All authors have read and agreed to publish the manuscript current version.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The procurement of the data required for this study was approved by the Autonomous University of Madrid ethics review board. All procedures were in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments. Parents and children provided written informed consent to participate in this study.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data are available on reasonable request and on signature of a confidentiality agreement from author Marina Muñoz-Rivas.

PEER REVIEW

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